

Young Lawyers Section
Idaho State Bar
Chris Christensen
3/18/09

Bar Quest: Pathways to the Profession

The Young Lawyers Section of the Idaho State Bar is very excited to announce its new program entitled Bar Quest: Pathways to the Profession. Bar Quest is an excellent opportunity for YLS members to provide service, guidance, and information to future Idaho lawyers about jobs in the legal profession. Bar Quest is also an excellent opportunity for current law students to learn more about potential employment opportunities and the day-to-day tasks of an attorney. Although Bar Quest is new, it is our hope that it will be a success and continue to grow in scope and outreach over the years, possibly even developing into an official mentoring program. For now, here is what Bar Quest entails:

General Format for Bar Quest

Bar Quest will be staffed by YLS volunteers. Bar Quest will serve any current law student or recent graduate who would like to learn more about a particular legal occupation or career path. There will be three types of opportunities provided: a brief meeting (an hour or two) for questions and answers, a half-day experience in which the student or recent graduate will job shadow a YLS volunteer for approximately half the day, and a full day option. The YLS volunteers are strongly encouraged to provide coffee or lunch for the student and to discuss his or her job in an open and honest manner, attempting to answer any questions that the student may have. The purpose of Bar Quest is not only to offer those interested an in-depth look at what a particular kind of legal job entails on a daily basis, but also to promote a nurturing forum for individual communication about challenges and opportunities in the legal profession.

Young Lawyer Section Members' Responsibilities

In order to ensure the success of Bar Quest, we need as many YLS members as possible to volunteer. The time commitment is minimal. The first step would be to ask for your boss's or supervisor's permission to participate in the program. Most likely, your boss will encourage your participation if the goals and benefits of the program are clearly explained. Next, anyone interested in volunteering should submit a brief biography about him or herself, discussing: law school activities, career path, bar activities, and a fairly detailed description of your current job and daily tasks. We also ask each potential volunteer to provide a maximum number of students you would be willing to accommodate or the maximum number of hours you would be willing to volunteer. Other than matching interested students with potential volunteers, the coordination of the date and times for the actual job shadowing will be the responsibility of the volunteer and the student.

Bar Quest is designed to cater to current law students or recent graduates, at least at this point. Because we are catering primarily to current students, and due to the location of the law school, it is likely that most of the requests from students will be for meetings during the week of Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, Spring Break, or Summer Break. We encourage the YLS volunteer to select a day for the job shadow that is reflective of a typical work day, but also a day that may involve doing a particular task that a student would find interesting. For example, a student would probably be interested in watching a court appearance, a deposition, a meeting with a client, or some task involving direct interaction. It would probably not be very interesting for a student to watch an attorney research or write for several hours.

As discussed above, we encourage the volunteer to take the student out for lunch or to coffee. Leaving the workplace may provide a less constrained environment and encourage questions from the student. Although we realize this is somewhat of a monetary commitment as well as an additional strain on your time, we encourage you to act generously and we are not making this financial commitment a requirement.

There may be several jobs that involve confidentiality issues. If a volunteer needs to meet somewhere other than the volunteer's place of work we ask that students please be accommodating. Also, volunteers need to be aware of potential confidentiality issues and act accordingly.

Students' Responsibilities

The first step in taking advantage of Bar Quest is to read through the various volunteer biographies and select a young lawyer you would like to visit. The next step is determining which of the three options you would like to participate in. Students may be able to meet with more than one young lawyer, depending on time constraints. Once you've made those decisions, please contact Chris Christensen and he will pass your contact information along to the volunteer. If you find several attorneys you are interested in visiting with, please prioritize your request from most interest to least interest. You should expect to hear from the volunteer within two weeks of submitting your information to Chris. If you have not heard from the volunteer after two weeks, please again contact Chris. It will be your duty to work out a satisfactory date and time with the volunteer you wish to visit. We ask that you be as accommodating with your availability as possible.

Some legal jobs involve delicate confidentiality issues. We ask that you follow all instructions or requests given by your volunteer regarding confidentiality.

This program is designed to improve collegiality in the Idaho State Bar and develop a closer relationship between the YLS and the law school. Because we want this program to benefit students in every way possible, please spend some time thinking seriously about whom you want to visit, why, and developing some questions for your volunteer. Additionally, this program is designed to benefit you, the student, but please bear in mind that it is brand new. We ask for your patience and encourage you to provide any feedback, positive or negative, regarding your experience with this program. Please send any feedback to Chris. Also, we encourage you to recommend this program to your friends if you find it beneficial.

Contact Information:

**Chris Christensen ccchrste@hotmail.com or cchristensen@idcourts.net
(208) 947-7583**

Volunteers Available for Job Shadowing:

Boise

ADA County Prosecutors Office - Civil or Criminal Division

Please consider the Ada County Prosecuting Attorneys Office a volunteer entity for the law student Shadowing program. We employ 64 deputy prosecuting attorneys in both our civil and criminal divisions

Kahle Becker

Kahle Becker is a Deputy Attorney General with the Idaho Department of Lands. His practice primarily focuses on navigable waterway issues, real estate transactions, forestry and range issues, as well as forest fire cost recovery litigation. He also serves in an advisory capacity for the Department similar to the role of an in house counsel at a corporation. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2004 with a JD and Certificate of Environmental Law, Science, and Policy. His undergraduate degree is in Biology from The Pennsylvania State University.

A day of job shadowing would most likely involve a discussion of the day to day activities for an in house government attorney as well as a tour of the Idaho Department of Lands central office in downtown Boise. Depending on timing and scheduling, the student may be able to sit in on a regularly scheduled monthly public meeting of the State Board of Land Commissioners. Again, depending on scheduling, a half day meeting and lunch would be most appropriate.

Joy Bingham

Joy M. Bingham is an associate attorney at the law firm of Jones & Swartz PLLC in Boise, ID. Jones & Swartz is a four-attorney firm with a specialized focus in civil litigation. Joy's current practice areas are concentrated in civil rights, contract disputes and personal injury.

Joy graduated from Northern Arizona University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Sciences with an Emphasis in Public Policy and Administration. She obtained her Juris Doctorate with Distinction from the University of North Dakota School of Law in 2007. Prior to joining Jones & Swartz in August of 2008, Joy worked as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Michael J. Kraker in Minnesota's 9th Judicial District.

Joy became a member of the North Dakota Law Review in 2006 and served as an Associate Editor from 2006 thru 2007. Her article regarding statutory protection for emotional abuse in circumstances of domestic violence was published in the Journal in 2005. Joy practiced before the state and federal courts of North Dakota as a certified student attorney in the Housing and Employment Litigation Clinic from 2006 thru 2007. There she singly developed, oversaw the execution of, and authored the Executive Report on the North Dakota Civil Legal Needs Assessment; a survey of indigent and under-represented North Dakotans, endorsed by the State Bar Association of North Dakota, North Dakota Legal Services, and the School of Law.

Joy became a member of the Minnesota State Bar in 2007 and of the Idaho State Bar in 2008. She is admitted to practice before the state courts of Minnesota and the state and federal courts of Idaho.

Chris Christensen

My name is Chris Christensen and I'm a clerk for Judge Perry on the Idaho Court of Appeals. I went to Willamette University for undergraduate and majored in Politics, Economics, and Spanish. I went to law school at the University of Idaho where I was very involved. During law school, I was a teaching assistant for the Legal Research and Writing Program, the President of the Board of Student Advocates, and on law review. I also participated in the Immigration and Tribal Clinic, where I argued a case in front of the Ninth Circuit; National Moot Court; student government; and several committees. The summer after my 1L year I did an externship at the Canyon County Public Defenders Office. The summer after my 2L year I did a study abroad program in Brazil.

Although I haven't ruled out any employment options for after my clerkship, I find immigration, criminal, and possibly international law most appealing. I will be clerking with Judge Perry through July 2010. Since being admitted to the Idaho Bar I have been very active in the YLS, the Diversity Section, Law Day, the Law Related Education's mock trial program, and several other volunteer activities including family law clinics and grading bar exams.

My clerkship involves predominantly legal research and writing. I read briefs and records, conduct legal research, and draft opinions. I also attend several oral arguments every month. Because my job involves primarily desk work, I would recommend that an interested student only job shadow me for half a day.

Ritchie Eppink

Ritchie Eppink is a staff attorney with Idaho Legal Aid Services, Inc., Idaho's largest public interest law firm. He specializes in tenant-side housing law and representing victims of domestic violence. Working out of offices both in Boise and at the Nampa Family Justice Center, Mr. Eppink provides legal services to the oppressed, the poor, the underprivileged, and the abused throughout ten counties in two judicial districts.

Mr. Eppink is a graduate of the University of Virginia, with distinction, and the University of Idaho College of Law, *summa cum laude*, and a recent Fulbright Fellow. He is a member of American Inn of Court No. 130, the National Lawyers Guild, and the Industrial Workers of the World.

Spending time alongside Mr. Eppink may offer insight into a number of skills, including those needed for court appearances, chambers conferences, client interviews, telephone and face-to-face negotiation with attorneys and government agencies, drafting pleadings, strategizing for litigation, coordinating with other social services providers, and handling urgent emergencies. Of course, the activities on a given day are often impossible to predict; nevertheless, some special interests can likely be accommodated.

Deborah Gates

Deborah recently moved to Idaho from California. She got her undergraduate degree in Psychology, and minored in Philosophy and Performing Arts, from Santa Clara University. Deborah got her law degree from Southwestern University, where she was a member of the Criminal Law and Women's Law Societies. Deborah has been a member of the Idaho State Bar since 2006 and she has extensive experience in the following practice areas: Bankruptcy, Tax and Civil Litigation; Insurance Litigation; Intellectual Property, Antitrust and Copyright Litigation; International Trade Commission Defense; Class Action Defense; Asbestos Defense; Corporate Law; Criminal Defense; Juvenile Defense; Family Law.

David Hyams

David is a commercial litigation associate at Holland & Hart, LLP, a full-service law firm with offices throughout the Rocky Mountain region. Before joining Holland & Hart in August 2008, he interned for Chief Judge Larry J. Naves of the Second Judicial District of Colorado as well as for the Justice & Mercy Legal Aid Clinic in Denver. Throughout law school, David was a law clerk for Arckey & Reha, LLC, a small litigation firm in Littleton, Colorado, where he gained substantial experience in Employment Law, Non-Compete Agreements, Trade Secrecy, Business Litigation, and Business Transactions.

David did not always aspire to be an attorney. Prior to earning his J.D. from the University of Denver in May 2008, he earned his B.S. in Sport Medicine from Colorado State University in 2000, an M.A. in Philosophy of Religion from Denver Seminary in 2003, and an M.A. in Philosophy from Georgia State University. Other than collecting degrees, he enjoys spending time with his wife and two-year old daughter, Mia.

David would love to chat with a law student over lunch about what the practice of law is like in a large law firm. Although he is working on a variety of exciting cases at various stages of litigation, that work mostly entails sitting at his desk doing research and writing--tasks that would be abysmally boring to observe.

Gabe McCarthy

BSU 2003 Political Science

UI 2006 J.D.

Idaho Bar September 2006

Boise City Attorney's Office January 2006 – October 2008

Solo Practitioner October 2008 – present

Member of Young Lawyers and Boise Young Professionals.

My practice is 100% criminal defense, except for a few pro bono family law cases. I am at the courthouse about a couple days a week. I am always happy to take a new lawyer, law student, or prospective law student to the courthouse and show them around. On a typical day I could introduce a student to a couple of judges, some prosecutors, some defense attorneys, and watch some court (arraignments, sentencings, motion hearings, court and jury trials). Starting May 1st, I will be renting office space from Goss Gustavel Goss, so I could introduce a student to those guys as well.

Elizabeth Herbst Schierman

Elizabeth Herbst Schierman is a patent attorney and former federal law clerk practicing in Idaho's oldest intellectual property law firm, Dykas, Shaver & Nipper, LLP, located in Boise. She works with a wide-range of clients, including large corporations that have international operations, start-ups and entrepreneurs, and independent inventors. Her practice is currently split about 70/30 between intellectual property litigation (*e.g.*, patent infringement, trademark infringement, and copyright infringement actions) and intellectual property prosecution work (*e.g.*, drafting and prosecuting patent applications, preparing and prosecuting trademark registration applications, and some copyright application-related work). Given the nature of the area of law, most litigation matters are conducted in federal court, but occasionally, she finds herself in state court as well. Her name is currently on the docket sheets of federal civil actions across the country, from New Jersey to California and many places in between, including in the District of Idaho. Her practice also includes representing clients before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board in actions such as Trademark Opposition proceedings, and representing clients in domain name disputes pursuant to ICANN's Uniform Domain-Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP). In addition to her participation in the Young Lawyers Section, she is actively involved in the Intellectual Property Law Section of the Idaho State Bar.

Because Ms. Schierman's normal work day most often involves work concentrating on highly-confidential matters (*e.g.*, inventions that have not yet been disclosed to the public), students would most likely not be able to observe Ms. Schierman at work in the office. However, a meeting with Ms. Schierman would include a tour of her firm's offices. The firm occupies a house built in or around 1904. It was supposedly

the home of Idaho's first state treasurer and is located near Boise's north end, just down the road from the federal courthouse. The meeting would also likely include a lunch during which Ms. Schierman and the student(s) can discuss her practice and background. That background includes her experience as a federal law clerk to then Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Larry M. Boyle in the District of Idaho, her time working in the technology transfer office of the Washington State University Research Foundation, and her experience working in the Research Engineering department at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories as an intellectual property intern. As an added bonus, Ms. Schierman and the student(s) will also likely meet with a current federal law clerk in the District of Idaho for an explanation of the clerk's normal day-to-day business and for a tour of the courthouse. If the student's or students' visit should happen to coincide with a meeting of the Intellectual Property Law Section, the Young Lawyers Section, or one of Ms. Schierman's in-court appearances, the student(s) would also most likely be welcome to attend.

Beth Smethers

Beth Smethers is an Associate at Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley, a Boise law firm representing clients in business transactions, litigation, and alternative dispute resolution. She specializes in general litigation. She attended the University of Idaho for her undergraduate and law school. Her undergraduate was in Business with an emphasis in Accounting. In law school, she was a teaching assistant for Legal Research and Writing, a Vice President of the Board of Student Advocates, and a member of the Nationals Moot Court team. She was also on law review and participated in the Domestic Violence Clinic. After law school, she had a one-year clerkship with Judge T.G. Nelson on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Beth welcomes the opportunity to explain the day-to-day activities of a new associate in a law firm or my clerkship experience over a lunch.

Brian Wonderlich

Brian Wonderlich was born in Twin Falls and raised on his family's horse ranch in Star, Idaho. He graduated from the University of Idaho in 2002 and the University of Idaho College of Law in 2007. Following law school, Brian worked as a law clerk for the Hon. Stephen Trott on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for one year. Since then he has worked as a Deputy Attorney General for the State of Idaho in the Civil Litigation Division where he handles matters sounding in a variety of legal genres, including contracts, torts, and constitutional law. A significant amount of his time is spent in motion practice (mainly drafting motions to dismiss and for summary judgment) and working on behalf of state agencies and officers. Other parts of his job include appellate work in the state and federal courts, negotiation of settlements, handling discovery, and advising state agencies and officers on litigation strategy and procedure.

I'd be happy to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of practicing civil litigation, of working for the State/government, of doing a clerkship after law school, and any other topic of interest to a law student. I'd also do my best to find a hearing for the student to attend and explain the process that lead up to the hearing.

Pocatello

Dave Bagley

Dave Bagley works at the Pocatello firm of Racine, Olson, Nye, Budge & Bailey, Chtd. Dave's current practice focuses on estate planning, tax controversies, and business and real estate transations.

Dave received his bachelor of arts from Brigham Young University and his J.D. from the University of Idaho. Dave also has an LLM in tax from the University of Florida.